

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed on November 7, 2007, all claims have been rejected as obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Henrickson in view of Jang. The claims have been amended to clarify some differences between claimed embodiments and the cited references. As amended, the claims are allowable over the references.

A. HENRICKSON TEACHES A CENTRALIZED CONFIGURATION DIFFERENT FROM THE CLAIMED INVENTION

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 2, which has been cancelled. As amended, claim 1 recites that one of the plurality of attendees communicate a primary selection command that is received by at least a portion of the plurality of other attendees and stored in a memory by each of the at least a portion of other attendees. Claim 1 further recites that individual attendees use the primary selection command they received and stored to identify the primary data stream.

Put another way, claim 1 generally calls for a “distributed” configuration where primary stream selection and identification is carried out by individual attendees – not by a centralized node. Claim 1 recites that the primary selection command originate from an attendee, and that it be communicated and received by others of the attendees, and that those attendees use the command to identify the primary data stream.

The Office Action cites Henrickson as disclosing these elements when rejecting original claim 2 (whose elements are now in amended claim 1). It is submitted that Henrickson fails to disclose these elements. Instead of teaching a distributed configuration as claimed, Henrickson discloses a centralized primary stream configuration and therefore teaches away from the claimed configuration.

Henrickson teaches all aspects of primary stream selection and use occur at a centralized network location (media resource node 124): “In the preferred embodiment, media resource function 124 includes a conference circuit that receives all inputs ... from the conference participants and distributes a mixed output to all conference participants.

The mixed output preferably includes and distinguishes the primary video image.” col. 4, lines 45 – 50; see also FIG. 1 showing central location of media resource function 124. This is very different from the claimed distributed configuration where primary stream selection and identification tasks are performed by conference attendees.

Henrickson’s configuration may offer less flexibility than the claimed embodiments since individual attendees cannot select a primary data stream(s). Further, Henrickson teaches that central media resource function 124 selects the primary stream based only on the audio volumes of the streams:

In accordance with the present invention, the audio packets received from conference participants (by media resource node 124) are analyzed to select the primary video image for display. ... If a particular participant is dominating the audio portion of the conference (206), then the primary video image that is sent to all participants is selected based on the participant dominating (the audio) ...

col. 4, line 52 – col. 5, line 23. Also, “(m)ost preferably, the loudest audio signal is used to select the primary video image. The primary video image is typically a video image of the loudest speaker” col. 5, lines 63-65.

Henrickson therefore fails to teach all of the elements required by claim 1, and the claim is allowable.

Independent claims 19 and 20 likewise require similar elements not disclosed or suggested by Henrickson. Claim 19 requires that a first attendee select at least one video stream to be the primary stream(s) and communicate a primary selection command to all other attendees identifying that primary stream(s). Claim 19 further requires that the other attendees receive the primary selection command and use it to identify the primary stream(s). Independent claim 20 requires that a primary selection command be communicated to a plurality of attendees. Henrickson’s centralized configuration fails to disclose or suggest these requirements, and instead places primary stream functionality at central media source 124.

B. DEPENDENT CLAIMS 3, 4 AND 18 ARE ALLOWABLE FOR OTHER REASONS

Because the independent claims are allowable, all of the dependent claims are likewise allowable. Several are allowable for other reasons as well. Claim 3, for example, calls for the at least one primary video stream to be a plurality of streams. Henrickson fails to disclose or suggest this required element, and in fact teaches away from this by specifying that only the one dominant audio stream is primary: “(m)ost preferably, the loudest audio signal is used to select the primary video image. The primary video image is typically a video image of the loudest speaker” col. 5, lines 63-65. Claim 4 depends from claim 3 and further recites that the primary selection command include a priority ranking for the plurality of primary data streams.

Claim 18 has been amended to further clarify one embodiment of the invention. Claim 18 recites that there are a plurality of primary streams. Claim 18 further recites that each of the at least a portion of attendees be a conference room that each has a plurality of cameras that generate video data streams. Claim 18 further recites that the at least one primary data stream be a plurality of primary video data streams, at least one video data stream from each of the plurality of conference rooms be designated a primary stream while at least one other stream from each room not be designated a primary stream.

Put another way, claim 18 recites that each attendee to send at least two video data streams to other users – a primary data stream and a second video data stream. Support for this is found, for example, on page 8 of the specification. This embodiment of the invention can be useful, for example, when a conference room with multiple cameras wishes to let other attendees know which camera is the “most important.”

The cited references fail to disclose or suggest these elements of claims 3, 4 and 18, with the result that they are allowable.

C. NEW CLAIMS 22 AND 23 ARE ALLOWABLE

New claim 22 has been presented for consideration and is believed to be allowable. Claim 22 depends from claim 1 and further includes steps of enforcing a rule

that allows only one of the conference attendees that holds a virtual token to communicate the primary selection command. Claim 22 further requires that the attendee holding the virtual token pass it to a second of the attendees wherein the second attendee can communicate the primary selection command. Support for this is found, for example, on page 8 of the specification.

New claim 23 depends from claim 1 and further clarifies that some particular steps are carried out on a local computer at the user location. Claim 23 recites, for example, that the primary selection command be stored on a memory in an attendee computer that is used to receive the data streams, and that the computer identify the primary stream(s) by comparing the received streams to the primary selection command stored in their computer. As explained above, Henrickson's centralized configuration does not disclose or suggest this, but instead teaches that the central media resource node 124 identify the primary stream based on audio volume.

The cited references fail to disclose or suggest the recited elements of new claims 22 and 23, with the result that they are allowable.

D. OTHER AMENDMENTS

Claims 10 and 17 have been amended to be consistent with the amended independent claim that each depends from.

E. CONCLUSION

For the reasons explained above, it is submitted that the claims in their current form are allowable. Timely examination and allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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